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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #0218

05/05/00

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Well, I think that the wet, cold, and dreary weather is behind us for awhile; it's been beautiful here the past couple of days, with more to come. I plan to get back out in the yard to resume work after having seen improvements delayed for a couple of weeks due to cold and rain! Good thing I got an early start this year! Joe, you don't know what you're missing (or maybe you do!).

It's a good thing that the weather has improved because this has probably been one of the worst past couple of weeks at work for me. As I mentioned a few weeks ago, I had applied for a new position in my department. The decision was supposed to be made over a week ago, but hadn't. The wait was killing me! In the meantime, I was "dumped" an additional shift to manage after my boss decided that after 4-plus months, she didn't know what to do with it! That plus being given additional initiatives to complete with depleted resources. And on top of it all, our staffing complement is down with double-digit open positions! Stress, what stress!?!

I kept inquiring as to the decision, and finally learned what that was yesterday. I did not get the position because I was "too valuable" to lose. That result was in the back of my mind, so I understood the rationale. However, I didn't think it was a fair resolution. Naturally, I complained. I got my points across although I knew the decision would not be reversed. Having the "upper hand", so to speak, I was able to get some things resolved and changed, including my salary. Although I'm still not happy with the job decision, at least I walked away with something even if it means I'll have more headaches! But it's Spring!

Until next time...

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8-Bit UnZIP 1.0 Released

Tom Hunt has released UnZIP 1.0 for the Atari 8-bit. It's been tested with Sparta DOS 3.3a and MyDos 4.50. It supports deflate, the most widely used compression method.

It is available from:

<http://cth.tzo.com/featured/toc.html>

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
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CCAG 2000

ATTENTION RETROGAMERS, COMPUTER COLLECTORS, VIDEO GAME FANATICS!!!!

CCAG 2000
(Classic Computer and Gaming 2000)

If you like collecting old computers, video games, and enjoy using them still, then come join us on:

June 17th, 2000
9AM till 6PM
National Guard Armory
3520 Grove Avenue
Lorain, Ohio 44055-2048
(On Route 57, going North of I-90/Route 2)

IT'S FREE!
Both vendors and attendees!
Computer User Groups and vendors inside, flea market outside!

Setup: 16th June, 2000
6PM-10PM
Please Call Ahead for Reservations:

Jim W. Krych jwkrych@n2net.net
440-979-9295

Fred M. Horvat fmh@netzero.net
440-286-2566

Please visit this site: www.videogameconnection.com

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, spring has finally sprung here in the northeast. It's been nice the past couple of weeks, but this week has been wonderful. It's been warm and fairly dry, and the trees and lawns are starting to green up nicely. Can you tell that I rent and don't have to worry about yard work? <grin>

Things on the Atari front are pretty much what you'd expect... Quiet.

While there aren't any new Atari computers being made... Well, that's not quite true... There're the Medusa and the Hades... but they're not really "mainstream" like the originals were. Anyway, where the heck was I going with this mess? Oh yeah. Since Atari is no more and our machines are getting older, there is less and less activity. Like you need me to tell you that, right?

Thank goodness for the talented and dedicated souls who still support not only our machines, but in a very real sense, us. The programs they write allow us to stay more current with the rest of the computer world, while staying within the limits imposed by our hardware. They deserve not only the shareware fees they request, but our undying respect and admiration. While the programming wizards who write code for the latest wiz-bang machines on the market often get the accolades, it takes more to write for a dated machine with limited memory and processor speed. They're probably some of the best programmers around and yet they write code that will almost certainly not earn them enough to keep them in coffee or Jolt Cola while they write the darned thing.

Even if you never actually contact any of the authors, think of them well and often as you use their wares.

Now let's get to the news and stuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

Mark Butler asks:

"I've just been asked how you can cancel the Auto-Folder from running when booting up an Atari.

If anyone knows then please post the answer."

Our friend and benefactor Sheldon Winick tells Mark:

"Either delete the folder if its not needed, or delete or rename the programs in that folder that you don't want to auto-load on bootup. For example, change the filename extensions from PRG to PRX for the programs you don't want to auto load, then if you later decide you want them to auto-load again, just change them back from PRX to PRG. There are also programs that can let you select which PRGs you want to auto load (which essentially just automates the process). Check some of the online libraries and you should be able to find them."

"Bruce" asks about MiNT:

"I just installed MiNT that I d/led from ftp.funet.fi... I followed the instructions to the letter.... and I copied the KEMD stuff over as well and the english was just fine but I've reached the reboot stage and when it reboots it hangs after the Ramdisk Filesystem for Mint loads.

Any one have any ideas?"

Mike Freeman tells Bruce:

"What HD driver do you use? When I tried installing it (a long time ago) it didn't like ICD Pro Driver 6.5.5 for some reason, and did a similar thing. It works with AHDI, CBHD, and HD Driver, though."

Pascal Ricard asks for info on MIME email attachments:

"I've been sent some programs for testing/translating. They were sent as MIME attachments with Outlook Express Mac v5.x but unfortunately Okami or POPWatch didn't get them right.

Did you ever have this problem ?"

Krzysztof Maj tells Pascal:

"Yes, it happens to me sometimes.
It is a problem of Okami - it can't cope with very big attachments.
In such a situation I used to decode attachment with an external program MUNPACK.TTP. It is possible because I am retrieving mail/news in UUCP mode and my MAILXXXX.ZIP and NEWS.ZIP files are not deleted from my harddisk."

Martin Byttebier adds:

"As a test I extracted an 11.8 MB Mime decoded mail with Okami. No problem whatsoever.

No, the problem is most likely nested multipart messages. (multipart message inside multipart message). Okami can't handle this yet.

If he saves the whole message (save to) he can use munpack.ttp too."

Rick Eisner asks about reading Atari floppies on a Mac or a PC:

"I need to find a way to read Atari 520ST disks into a Mac or PC.

My disks work fine on the Atari, but on the Mac and PC they appear to have only 56K of readable space, and no files on them. I've tried several machines, and could not find a way to access them.

I've also tried NoSTalgia 0.65 PPC, but it would not read in the disks. Nor would DUST 1.0.4 read in the disks.

I may not be using these tools right, or they may simply not be the right ones.

Can someone give me some assistance, PLEASE!!!?"

Christian Quante tells Rick:

"You may format a disks with "DOS-Format" and copy the files to this disk. But there is a bug in older TOS's, so they don't format "DOS" correctly. I think it's TOS < 1.04?!!?"

Another way to "read ST-Disks" is to image the disks on the ST and read the images in the PC with your emulator. Pacifist does this for you. The problem is: I don't know any program to image a disk with your Atari ST."

Mark Wherry posts:

"Just to say that an early beta version of GEMTrade v3.0 is now available at:

http://www.cix.co.uk/~mark_wherry/index.html

The main change at this stage is the inclusion of the new dictionary, which also adds French into the fun! :-) Though bear in mind that while all possibilities are implemented, German->English and German->French are the ones that work the most effectively.

While this has not been thoroughly tested, it seems to work OK under MagiC PC 6...

If anyone is interested, please continue the thread or email me and let me know how you get on..."

Edward Baiz tells Mark:

"Thanks for the upgrade. It works fine going from German to English. I have not tried the French end yet, but soon will. The only small problem comes when using Gemtrade as a module in Cab. How do you set Gemtrade to work with German or French websites with manually doing it? If I set it to work with a German website and then go to a French one, Gemtrade still tries to translate the website from German to English. Still, much congrats on your efforts. I do not mind the manual setting."

Mark tells Edward:

"That is an exceptionally good point!!! :-) I will need to add a language selection dialogue to allow you to choose when it is launched as a CAB module..."

Lyndon Amsdon asks about viewing PDF files:

"Anyone know if there is a PDF file viewer for Ataris? There are some pictures and pinouts for chips I need but they're in pdf extension. Imagecopy 4 doesn't view them, PCs need Adobe Acrobat I think."

Martin Byttebier lays it all out for Lyndon:

"ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be/atari/editors/ghostscript/

editors/ghostscript:

total 10244

```
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 1437413 Mar 29 21:33 gemgs13-bin.lzh
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 912312 Mar 29 03:42 gemgs13-doc.lzh
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 684859 Mar 29 03:58 gemgs13-fnt1.lzh
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 1184175 Mar 29 04:25 gemgs13-fnt2.lzh
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 923 Mar 29 21:24 gemgs13-ger.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 923 Apr 3 00:17 gemgs13-ger.upd.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 560097 Mar 29 04:40 gemgs13-lib.lzh
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 65936 Mar 29 04:43 gemgs13-src.lzh
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ftp 3928 Apr 3 00:12 gemgs13-upd.lzh
```

You need at least gemgs13-bin, gemgs13-fnt1, gemgs13-fnt2, gemgs13-lib and gemgs13-upd"

Peter West adds:

"Yes, there is Ghostscript and GEMGS (adds a GEM front end for easier handling). The latest version 1.3 is available from Derryck's home page <http://www.cix.co.uk/~derryck/index.htm>

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - 3DO Is PSX2 Licensee! E3 Previews!  
    " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "  
                                GTA2 For Dreamcast! 4-Wheel Thunder!  
                                Wild Arms 2! Battle For Naboo!  
                                And much more!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Four Games Available in 2000; Six Additional Titles in Development

"We're thrilled to be in on the ground floor of the most important platform launch in industry history," said Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company. "It's our first chance as a software company to be there from day one, and we will take full advantage. PlayStation 2 console is a watershed moment for the game industry, the turning point where a hobby business will turn into a giant mass market for entertainment."

Army Men -- Sarge's Heroes 2: Army Men -- Sarge's Heroes 2 stars Sarge, Vikki Grimm, and the rest of Bravo Company in a 3-D action combat game featuring 17 single player campaign missions and 8 multi-player levels. The ongoing battle between the Green and Tan Armies has escalated to incredible new heights. Beginning where the Sarge's Heroes story has left off, players will find the evil Tan dictator, General Plastro, has been trapped in the human world. Enter Brigitte Blue, a Blue Army spy who is as diabolical as she is beautiful. Brigitte joins forces with General Plastro to find the key to destroying the Green Nation once and for all.

Featuring fluid 60 frame-per-second action, dynamic lighting, shadowing, extensive digitized voice, and an immersive 3D sound environment, Army Men -- Sarge's Heroes 2 for the PlayStation 2 console is expected to be the most incredible chapter yet in the immensely popular series.

Army Men -- Air Attack 2: Army Men -- Air Attack 2 is a fast-paced, one or two player helicopter action game starring Captain Blade and the rest of the Alpha Wolf Squadron set in a fully interactive environment. Featuring over 25 levels and diverse interactive indoor and outdoor environments, and in-game voice-overs, Army Men -- Air Attack 2 continues the classic struggle between the Green and Tan armies. The evil General Plastro, leader of the Tan Army, had set a trap to lure Sarge and the rest of Sarge's Heroes far into Tan territory. It's up to Captain Blade and crew to find

Sarge and crew and bring them back home.

World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks: WDL: Thunder Tanks takes players to a post-apocalyptic world where combat is now a regularly televised sports event. Fifty years after the Great War and the fall of mankind, humanity has returned. With the reintroduction of the television, the need for quality entertainment has given rise to the World Destruction League, a weekly program pitting combatants from around the globe. Hosted by Nina Hardrack and Chuck ``Mad Dog" Clements, competitors battle to the death in customized tanks for the title of Battle Lord.

Might and Magic: Might and Magic is a 3rd person action adventure set in the land of Ardon, a land ravaged by famine, pestilence and disease, legacies of a long and destructive war. In this miserable setting, the seeds of mistrust and hatred have been sown, leading to accusations of witchcraft and condemnation of the innocent. Our hero, Drake, is one such accused and sets out to prove his innocence. Through his investigations, Drake will discover a more sinister plot involving an evil deity bent upon total destruction of humanity.

Might and Magic brings the incredibly popular Might and Magic universe to the PlayStation 2 console. The Might and Magic brand, created by Jon Van Caneghem in 1986, includes the best-selling Might and Magic role-playing games, the Heroes of Might and Magic strategy games, and the Crusaders of Might and Magic action games. To date, well over four million units have been sold worldwide in the Might and Magic universe, and the games have been translated into more than 12 languages.

Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc.'s Rockstar
Games Launches GTA2 For the Sega Dreamcast

Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. subsidiary, Rockstar Games announced that it shipped GTA2 for the SEGA Dreamcast in North America. The launch of GTA2 for the Dreamcast represents the debut of Rockstar's best selling and award winning Grand Theft Auto series for the new SEGA platform.

``We are very pleased to be releasing this stellar version of GTA2 for the Dreamcast system. Substantial work has gone in to revising the original GTA2 to tailor its graphic features to take best possible advantage of SEGA's powerful hardware platform," stated Sam Houser, President of Rockstar Games. ``We are confident that GTA2 Dreamcast will make a welcome addition to any existing Grand Theft Auto fan's library of GTA games, and that it will represent introduction to the franchise for new enthusiasts."

GTA2 builds on the anarchic theme of the original Grand Theft Auto, allowing gamers to have complete freedom to move through the expansive open gameplay environment, but this time your life is much more complicated. You are not simply running from the police, you have to deal with GTA2's intelligent gang warfare system which forces you to manage delicate relationships with seven ruthless gangs that control the darker side of the city - work with any gang and they will support you, but others will instantly take a dislike to you, and your life expectancy just dipped instantly! In this game RESPECT IS EVERYTHING!

Off-Road Racing Game Comes Home On Sega Dreamcast

Midway Games Inc. announced that ``4 Wheel Thunder" is now available for Sega Dreamcast at retail outlets.

This next-generation off-road racer is the second release in Midway's ``Thunder" series, which first launched with the popular arcade and home-console speed boat racing video game ``Hydro Thunder."

``4 Wheel Thunder" is a high-speed racing game featuring graphics that make the most of Sega Dreamcast at 60 frames per second. Players have the ability to choose from more than 30 off-road vehicles and 30 intense tracks, five of which are reserved exclusively for multiplayer races.

Performance upgrades such as turbo, fender, brakes, exhaust and ``Super Boost," just to name a few, allow players to race with the ultimate in off-road vehicles.

``Midway's over-the-top 'Thunder' series is successful for both arcade and home-gaming consoles," said Helene Sheeler, vice president of marketing, Midway Games. ``On the land or on the water, the 'Thunder' series is popular because of its graphics-rich presentation and super-fast, crazy-fun gameplay."

In ``4 Wheel Thunder," players enter an off-road championship race that tests their mettle against skilled racers. During the championship, a wager can be placed against opponents, with the winnings used to upgrade a vehicle's performance. Set amidst visually stunning desert winds, icy mountains and twisting roads, ``4 Wheel Thunder" is optimized for Sega Dreamcast's 3-D capabilities.

``4 Wheel Thunder" Key Features:

- 60 frames per second graphics engine designed to make the most of Sega Dreamcast;
- 30 different vehicles to choose from including: quads, dune buggies and monster trucks;
- 30 exceptionally detailed tracks, including five that are reserved exclusively for multiplayer play;
- Supported by the Jump Pack and VMU;
- Visual effects are exceptional and bring reflection, shading, sparks and skid marks;
- Weather effects such as rain, fog, storm effects, mud, dust and others effect driving; and
- For one or two players.

Midway's upcoming ``Thunder" products include ``Offroad Thunder," which was recently launched in the arcade and is being developed for home console release later this year.

Naboo Freedom Fighters Clash With Evil Trade Federation Forces in LucasArts' Star Wars: Episode I Battle for Naboo

The greedy Trade Federation has invaded pastoral Naboo, and the vile

Neimoidians are wreaking havoc on the peaceful world. The planet's people have been imprisoned... or worse. But a handful of resistance fighters have rallied to defend their homeworld. LucasArts Entertainment Company LLC challenges players to strike back on land, sea and air in the Nintendo 64 action-arcade title Star Wars: Episode I Battle for Naboo. Inspired by the critically acclaimed Star Wars: Rogue Squadron, the game is being developed in conjunction with Factor 5 LLC and is expected for release in fall 2000.

In Battle for Naboo, players clash with Trade Federation battle droids, droid starfighters, battle tanks, and numerous other enemies while progressing through sixteen immersive levels. Throughout the game, players will leap into a variety of Episode I and original Star Wars vehicles and traverse a wide range of environments, from the city streets of Theed to snow-peaked mountains.

"Battle for Naboo follows the tradition of the award-winning Nintendo 64 flight action game, Rogue Squadron," says Tom Byron, director of product marketing for LucasArts. "The game extends the genre by incorporating a wide variety of vehicles and massive levels. Star Wars fans will be enthralled by Battle for Naboo's storyline, which introduces a host of new characters and locations to the universe."

Although Battle for Naboo intersects Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace at key plot points, the storyline is entirely original. Players will assume the role of Lieutenant Gavyn Sykes, a young and dedicated Naboo soldier fighting to defend his planet. In his quest to free Naboo, Sykes must master multiple vehicles, including the fast and agile N-1 starfighter, a heavily armored battle STAP, a stolen Trade Federation gunboat, and the powerful Gian speeder, to name a few. Each vehicle has different strengths, weaknesses, and weapons; understanding these factors will be a key to victory.

Gavyn's missions span both the planet of Naboo and its immediate orbit, allowing players to visit dozens of new and familiar locations. At these sites, players will be immersed in many different combat scenarios, including air-to-air, ground-to-ground, and air-to-ground battles. As in Rogue Squadron, players also will be able to seek out hidden power ups, weapons, and secret vehicles to use against the numerous Trade Federation forces.

Battle for Naboo's dynamic difficulty adjustment ensures that all players, regardless of skill level, will find the title easily accessible and challenging. As they progress, the game continually evaluates the player's performance and adjusts the levels accordingly. Thus, extremely skilled players will always find the game engaging, while novice pilots can continue to hone their skills as they venture through each thrilling mission.

Experience What Legends are Made of in Wild Arms 2

Sony Computer Entertainment America announced the nationwide release of Wild Arms 2, exclusively for the PlayStation game console. As the sequel to 1997's role-playing hit Wild Arms, Wild Arms 2 is a true, traditional role-playing game (RPG) which brings back the best features from the first installment while adding all-new improved graphics with fully rendered 3D worlds, new characters, complex puzzles and dynamic real-time battles.

From the producer of the original Wild Arms and Legend of Legaia, Wild Arms 2 offers an intricate and rich storyline that plunges players into an epic adventure full of impassioned characters, intense action, strategic battles and powerful magic. Players will explore a vast, engaging world while seeking truths to legends, searching for mysterious places, and interacting with fascinating characters.

"The role-playing game community has been anxiously awaiting the release of Wild Arms 2," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "Combining the all-new 3D elements with intense gameplay and a fresh, engaging storyline, Wild Arms 2 strengthens PlayStation's position as the system for RPG gamers."

Players must venture through Filgaia as one of three characters: Ashley, Lilka or Brad. Also known as dream chasers, these characters each possess their own distinct abilities and special fighting skills when engaged in battle. In Wild Arms 2, the journey will vary depending on the character selected, the information and items acquired, and the final decisions made by the player as the storyline unravels.

Key features in Wild Arms 2 include:

- All-new improved graphics engine to support fully polygonal 3D worlds, including 3D towns, maps and dungeons
- Enormous depth in gameplay involving an intriguing storyline, intelligent puzzles and strategic battles
- Controllable camera angles to modify the player's view
- Fantastical 3D turn-based battles
- Greater character animations and greater detailed enemy characters
- Help feature guides that assist the player through the commands in the game
- Highly compelling soundtrack to complement gameplay
- Many customization options including control functions, camera angles, cursor position in the command and item selections screens, screen saver on/off, and stereo or mono settings for background music

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates Wild Arms 2 "E" for "Everyone." For more information about the ESRB visit www.esrb.org.

Top Action Gaming and Kids' Developer n-Space Showcases Three Hot Games At This Years E3

n-Space, developer of such hit Sony PlayStation titles as Duke Nukem: Time to Kill and Rugrats: Search for Reptar, announced its lineup of PlayStation games to be shown at that this years E3. The list of titles includes:

Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes - The sequel to Duke Nukem: Time to Kill (Sony's 1998 "Shooter of the Year").

Mary-Kate & Ashley's: Magical Mystery Mall - A fun-filled activities game starring the adorable Olsen Twins.

DangerGirl - The first title created using n-Space's developer controlled license of the best-selling DC Comics series by J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell.

''There is no question that the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system introduced earlier this year in Japan and spotlighted at this years E3 is going to be key to the future of gaming," said Erick S. Dyke, president of n-Space, inc. ''yet n-Space and our publishing partners still believe that gamers will still be looking for quality gaming experiences on the current PlayStation system for some time to come."

The n-Space games shown at E3 breakdown as follows:

Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes - Duke Nukem is back! And he's ready for action! In the sequel to the PlayStation hit ''Duke Nukem: Time to Kill". (One Man. One Mission. One Million Babes to Save). In the distant future, vicious aliens rule the Earth. Only bodacious babes survive, enslaved by the hostile alien overlords. The women and the world need a hero. And there's only one man big enough for the job! With a huge new arsenal of destructive weapons and a legion of sinister new enemies, Duke Nukem - Planet of the Babes is heart-pounding Duke action at its most savage.

Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes for the PlayStation was developed by n-Space in cooperation with 3DRealms and is being published by GT Interactive Software. The game carries an ESRB rating of ''M" (Mature). (Infogrammes Booth/South Hall #1324)

Mary-Kate & Ashley's: Magical Mystery Mall - Mary-Kate & Ashley find themselves on a magical journey as they venture through this mysterious mall filled with fun and surprises. From creating your own music video, to putting on your very own fashion show, every store is packed with thrills and adventure!

Mary-Kate & Ashley's: Magical Mystery Mall for the PlayStation is being developed by n-Space and published by Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. The game carries an ESRB rating of ''E" (Everyone). (Acclaim Booth/South Hall #1124)

DangerGirl - 3rd person action/adventure has never been sexier with DangerGirl, the new PlayStation game based on the best-selling DC Comics acclaimed Cliffhanger series by J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell. Featuring a brand new storyline that picks up where DangerGirl #7 leaves off, fans can control any one of 3 beautiful, yet lethal spies including Abbey Chase, Sydney Savage and a new character, yet to be introduced in the comic book series! 12 fully explorable levels, a vast array of weapons and gadgets and all the regular DangerGirl allies and foes combine for a PlayStation title as irresistible as its inspiration!

DangerGirl for the PlayStation is being developed by n-Space in partnership with J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell and is being published by THQ Inc. The game is not yet rated. (THQ Booth/West Hall #2608)

All three games support the Dual Shock analog controllers.

Neither of n-Space's two next-generation PlayStation2 titles will be showcased at this years E3.

More information on the n-Space titles can be found on the n-Space company web site: <http://www.n-Space.com/>.

Acclaim Entertainment Announces New Titles for
the PlayStation 2 Computer Entertainment System

Acclaim Entertainment announced development of two new games for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. The games, Shadow Man: 2econd Coming and ``Big Wave Surfing" (working title) are due to be released in early 2001. Acclaim previously announced development of All-Star Baseball 2002 as well a new games based on the Ferrari Formula 1 and 360 Challenge series on the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system.

``The five titles we've announced to date for PlayStation 2 are just a taste of what gamers can expect from Acclaim," said Mark Bilger, Executive Vice-President, Worldwide Product Development, Acclaim Entertainment. ``We are fully committed to developing for PlayStation 2, and are working closely with Sony Computer Entertainment America to ensure that our games take full advantage of the system's unique capabilities, and bring a new level of excitement to the marketplace."

``This is a very exciting time for the video game industry - with new console systems poised to hit the market this fall - fueling a true renaissance in software development," said Greg Fischbach, co-chairman and CEO of Acclaim Entertainment. ``Acclaim is dedicated to developing quality games that help push the envelope and propel our future growth."

Shadow Man: 2econd Coming

The sequel to 1999's premier horror game Shadow Man, Shadow Man: 2econd Coming follows Mike LeRoi/the Shadow Man into another adventure battling evils in this world and the world of the dead - Deadside. In this second chapter of the Shadow Man story, our hero finds himself going up against the Grigori - a group of demons who have been masquerading as humans for the past 2000 years and who are now attempting to bring back their evil leader Asmodeus from the Pit to bring about the end of the world as prophesied in the Book of Revelation. The familiar characters introduced in the original Shadow Man video game are back - Nettie, the 400-year old voodoo priestess who occupies the body of a 20-year old, Jaunty, the skull-headed gatekeeper of Deadside and a new character - Thomas Deacon - a wheelchair-bound private investigator and self-proclaimed Demon Hunter who has a score to settle with the Grigori.

``Big Wave Surfing"

Acclaim is also developing a new surfing game for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, tentatively titled Big Wave Surfing, to be released in Spring 2001. The game will make big-wave riding and professional surf competition accessible and thrilling to anyone in the world with any level of game-playing experience. In addition, ``Big Wave Surfing" will capture the speed, intensity and thrill of surfing while staying true to the purity of the sport. Acclaim has signed an exclusive deal with surfing champion Sunny Garcia to appear in the game, and will secure similar deals with other surfers in the near future. ``Big Wave Surfing" is being developed by Osiris Studios.

Acclaim will announce more specific details on these and other upcoming games and provide a release schedule over the next several months. Shadow Man: 2econd Coming, All-Star Baseball 2002, and Acclaim's Ferrari games will be shown publicly for the first time at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles from May 11th-13th.

Square Announces Product Lineup for Electronic Entertainment Expo

Square Electronic Arts announced the titles it will debut at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) to be held May 11-13, 2000 in Los Angeles, California.

Square's product lineup consists of two titles for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, including The Bouncer, an action fighting game and Driving Emotion Type-S, a driving simulation game. Square will also offer a preview of FINAL FANTASY IX for the PlayStation game console. FINAL FANTASY IX is the latest title in the popular FINAL FANTASY series, which has sold more than 26 million units to date.

In addition to FINAL FANTASY IX, Square will present a variety of role-playing games (RPGs) for the PlayStation game console that range from the traditional RPG style that Square has become famous for to more action-oriented games that will appeal to casual gamers. Among these are two sequels to past hits, Chrono Cross and Parasite Eve 2, and a new medieval action/adventure title, Vagrant Story.

The following PlayStation 2 titles will be shown:

THE BOUNCER -- A "Seamless Action Battle" where fighting elements combine with life-like action allowing multiple players and multiple enemies to fight simultaneously -- a feature never before seen in a video game. New and dynamic developmental features allow interactivity with the environment like tables, chairs, and debris where action battles take place involving as many as 10 characters at once. Character designs by famed FINAL FANTASY and Parasite Eve artist Tetsuya Nomura bring an amazingly life-like look and feel to characters in this "Playing Action Movie." The Bouncer is scheduled to ship in late 2000.

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S -- A driving simulation game implementing a number of innovative features not found in typical racing games. Featuring a superior engine that accurately simulates the physics of driving, every detail such as air, weight, gravity and resistance is systematically calculated to give gamers a true feel of driving at high speeds. To add even more realism to the game, Driving Emotion Type-S features a new driving perspective that allows gamers to experience driving from inside the car. Ultimately, this translates to having an up close look at every minute detail of a car's interior, and a driving experience like no other. The title will ship in 2001.

The following PlayStation titles will also be on display:

VAGRANT STORY -- an action/role-playing game set in a medieval world where the player takes the role of a knight who has been wrongly accused of murder and must flee into hiding to uncover the truth. The game features a unique weapon system in which players can create their own armaments from various pieces of weapons they find throughout the game. Vagrant Story offers breathtaking cinematic sequences accompanied by movie-style gameplay features such as innovative lighting and editing effects. Vagrant Story is scheduled to ship on May 16, 2000 packaged with a demo disc -- 2000 collector's CD Vol. 3 -- including interactive and non-interactive demos of other Square titles including Chocobo Racing, Chocobo's Dungeon 2, SaGa Frontier 2, Front Mission 3, Legend of Mana, Chrono Cross and Threads of Fate.

LEGEND OF MANA -- a role-playing game set in a magical, fairy-tale world and depicted in brilliant 2D watercolor graphics. Players assume the role of one of two playable characters and embark on a quest to restore the world of Fa'Diel. They do so by using the "Land Creation System" that employs artifacts received throughout the game to create the individual lands. As players expand the world, they must also face a variety of monsters and level bosses. Legend of Mana is slated to ship June 13, 2000.

THREADS OF FATE -- a role-playing game with a deep storyline and thrilling action and puzzle elements. Players can choose between two characters who are both trying to obtain the Dew Prism, an artifact that has the power to reshape reality. In the search for this artifact, players travel through the game's eight levels and use their character's special powers to battle powerful enemies. Players can kick and punch during attacks providing non-stop action and a reliance on quick reflexes. Threads of Fate is scheduled to ship July 18, 2000.

CHRONO CROSS -- a role-playing game and follow up to the popular Chrono Trigger in which the two main characters face a strange evil presence that threatens the universe. Their only hope in eliminating it lies in a secret and powerful artifact which they set out to find. Players utilize a battle system that offers real-time fighting sequences for uninterrupted battle and flexible fighting options. The game also features high-quality full motion video sequences created by the same team that created the sequences for FINAL FANTASY VIII. Chrono Cross is scheduled to ship in August 2000.

PARASITE EVE 2 -- a sequel to the best-selling role-playing adventure game, Parasite Eve 2 again places the player in the role of Aya Brea, a policewoman from New York. A new breed of monsters has emerged and Aya must fight the spread of the creatures. Players collect and customize a wide variety of weapons and armor as they progress through the game. Realistic computer generated cinematic sequences transition fluidly in and out of the gameplay. Parasite Eve 2 is slated to ship in September 2000.

FINAL FANTASY IX -- the latest in Square's world-renowned FINAL FANTASY franchise, FINAL FANTASY IX allows gamers to return to roots of the franchise's success. The title plays out in a classic FINAL FANTASY medieval setting with the return of staple characters largely enhanced by beautifully animated computer generated graphics. Famed artist, Yoshitaka Amano, works on FINAL FANTASY IX as character designer and the image illustrator. With vast artistic, creative and developmental talents involved in the project, the last FINAL FANTASY game on the PlayStation game console is sure to inspire more audiences than even previous versions. FINAL FANTASY IX is set to ship in late 2000.

Red Storm Entertainment Takes E3 by Storm

"Variety is the spice of life," and that's just what Red Storm Entertainment plans to show at the Electronic Entertainment Expo next week by presenting such titles as Rogue Spear: Urban Operations, Bang! Gunship Elite, Covert Operations Essentials, Freedom: First Resistance, Rogue Spear for PlayStation, and Roswell Conspiracy Theories: Aliens, Myth & Legends for two platforms.

-- Rogue Spear: Urban Operations for the PC is a continuation of the Rainbow Six series as a mission pack

to the sequel, Rogue Spear. It is an action/strategy game for the PC that was released in stores only weeks ago.

-- Bang! Gunship Elite is an exciting space action game with 19 missions across a jaw-dropping, real-time 3-D universe. The PC version will be shown at E3 and is scheduled for release in the 2nd quarter of 2000. A Dreamcast version is also planned for release in the 3rd quarter of 2000.

-- Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Covert Operations Essentials is an in-depth interactive guide that bridges the gap between fiction and real-world special operations. It is informational content along with an action/strategy stand-alone mission pack for the PC in the Rainbow Six franchise. This product is due for release in the 3rd quarter of 2000.

-- Freedom: First Resistance is a 3rd person single player action-adventure game based on Anne McCaffrey's Freedom trilogy of novels. This game will take the player through intense combat as well as challenging puzzle solving and is due for release on the PC in the 4th quarter of 2000.

-- Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear for PlayStation is the sequel to the top selling original Rainbow Six game. This version will feature 19 missions, including based on the PC mission pack, Urban Operations. With stunning graphics and an easy to use planning interface, this game is due for release in the 4th quarter of 2000.

-- Roswell Conspiracy Theories: Aliens, Myths & Legends(TM) is based on a new animated children's television series due to launch in the fall of 2000. Players will take on the roles of Detection Agents Nick Logan and Sh'Lainn Blaze as they set off on a mission to protect the Earth and its inhabitants! The aliens come in all disguises, some as Vampires and Werewolves. Dreamcast and GameBoy color versions will be shown at E3, both due for release in the 4th quarter of 2000.

You can find Red Storm Entertainment at E3 in booth 1246, South Hall, Los Angeles, Convention Center, May 11-13, 2000.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -          Online Users Growl & Purr!
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SKYHAMMER ORDERS DUE

Skyhammer is slated for release at the end of May, and Songbird appreciates the prompt payments from all customers. If you pre-ordered by Nov 1, 1999, you owe \$44.95 plus shipping. If you pre-ordered after Nov 1, 1999, you owe \$54.95 plus shipping. Finally, new orders sent at this time owe \$79.95 plus shipping. Shipping is \$5 for USA/Canada orders, and \$8 for international. (Large international orders may be charged additional shipping.)

Order forms and the Songbird mailing address may be found at
<http://songbird.atari.net>.

A special note to credit card customers, Songbird is moving away from using Multimedia 1.0 to process credit cards. If your balance has not yet been taken care of, Songbird would greatly appreciate it if you could pay your balance by check, MO, or online using PayPal (see the link on the Songbird catalog web page). Thanks in advance for understanding.

LYNX PROGRAMMING CONTEST

Songbird is sponsoring the first ever Lynx programming contest. Details available on the Songbird web pages in the "Press" section. Contest duration is May 1 to August 1. Get to work on your submission right away, and maybe win some cool prizes!

REMNANT FOR THE ATARI LYNX

Songbird has yet another Lynx title in development -- this time it's a cool 3D space combat game called Remnant. Check out the special preview page located at:

<http://songbird.atari.net/remnant.shtml>

LYNX OTHELLO NOW AVAILABLE

This is the first new Lynx product for the year. You won't want to miss out on this timeless classic, now available for the Atari Lynx. Check out this and all the NEW Atari products available on the Songbird web pages.

Carl Forhan
Songbird Productions
<http://songbird.atari.net>

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Appeal Could Last a Year, Official Says

Microsoft's appeal of the antitrust verdict against it and government proposals to break the company in two could last a year or longer, but a change in U.S. presidents should not prevent the case from going forward, a top U.S. official said on Sunday.

Joel Klein, the head of the Justice Department's antitrust division, said U.S. officials wanted to have the matter resolved quickly.

On Friday, the Justice Department and 17 states proposed that Microsoft be split into two companies to curb its monopoly power. Microsoft has called the breakup extreme and has vowed to appeal the case all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary.

"I think it could take a year, maybe a little more than a year," Klein said of the appeals process. "But from our point of view we'd like to move it along. The country has an interest in seeing the matter resolved."

Klein was speaking on the CBS News program "Face the Nation."

If the case does linger into next year, it would have to proceed under a different presidential administration. A new U.S. president will be sworn in next January.

Klein said he thought the case could move forward no matter which political party was in power. He compared it to the 1982 breakup of telephone giant AT&T, which was filed and settled under two different Republican presidents and prosecuted by a Democratic administration in between.

"The Justice Department is in the business of law enforcement. It's not in the business of politics," Klein said.

Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the Republican presidential candidate, has said he hopes that however the case is resolved, it does not "ruin" Microsoft because the company has played an important role in development of new technology.

Some experts have said Microsoft may try again to reach a settlement. A Bush presidency could provide a new context for negotiations.

Under the Justice Department proposal unveiled Friday, Microsoft would be split into two companies, one that makes operating systems and another that makes applications. Microsoft will reply May 10 and the judge will hold a hearing May 24.

Microsoft Wants Time to Examine Breakup Plan

Microsoft Corp. said on Tuesday it will ask for more time to prepare a detailed defense against the U.S. government's proposal to break up the software giant to curb its monopoly in computer operating systems.

Microsoft will file its objections to the government's proposal on schedule on May 10, and also will suggest allowing it more time to gather data and detail its opposition to the breakup plan, spokesman Jim Cullinan said.

Cullinan said that because of the complexity of the proposal by the U.S. Justice Department and 17 states filed last Friday, Microsoft wanted to do

further research into the plan.

''We have not started even looking into the details of their proposal," Cullinan said.

''We are going to state our objections to it and propose our remedy ... and we are going to look ahead to the process," Cullinan said. ''There could be hearings and witnesses with examination and cross-examination,"

The government will have until May 17 to answer Microsoft's objections, and a court hearing is scheduled for May 24. If Microsoft's request is granted, it could postpone a final remedy for months.

Microsoft said last week before the plan was announced that it would need more time to present a response if the government called for a breakup, and Cullinan said it had been understood that the process could take longer if the government's remedy was as harsh as a breakup.

A government official said that Microsoft was simply seeking to delay the process. The official said Microsoft had all of the information it needed to evaluate the government's proposal and there was no need to engage in extensive discovery.

At an April 4 meeting with the parties, Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson discussed with lawyers for both sides what would happen next.

''What I do not want to do is to have caused this thing to drag on through a number of months of additional proceedings." Jackson said.

In its proposal, the Justice Department said Microsoft should be broken in two, with one company selling the Windows operating system for personal computers and the other handling other programs such as word processing and Internet browsing software.

Microsoft was found guilty last month of abusing its control over Windows, which runs about 80 percent of PCs, to harm rivals and strong-arm partners.

The company has insisted it is innocent, vowing to appeal the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary.

'I Love You' Virus Hits Computers

A software virus that seduced computer users with an e-mail note proclaiming ''ILOVEYOU" crippled government and corporate computer networks around the world Thursday and destroyed personal files of music and pictures.

By some estimates, the ''love bug" infected tens of millions of computers worldwide, not only spreading by e-mail like last year's Melissa virus, but through instant messaging systems that let people chat on the Internet.

In another malicious twist, the new virus was designed to destroy several types of increasingly popular computer files, including those storing pictures, video and music.

Computer security experts, stunned by the rapid spread of the virus, urged

computer users to delete any e-mail with a subject line reading
''ILOVEYOU" and a message saying ''kindly check the attached LOVELETTER
coming from me."

''I stepped away from my desk for 30 minutes and when I came back, there
were 177 people who were in love with me," said Ted Canova, news director
at WCCO-TV in Minneapolis, who deleted the files and suffered no damage.
''That's in addition to the 200 I had when I signed on today."

The virus was activated by opening the ''LOVELETTER" attachment. That
commandeered a computer's Internet browser to visit a Web page, download a
program that searches for various types of passwords, and send them to an
e-mail account that appears to be based in the Philippines. The Web site
was later shut down by its service producer.

''If this is unleashed on your home computer, I hope you have backups. It
is a destructive file. Once it has run, it has done its damage," said
Shawn Hernan, vulnerability team manager at the CERT Coordination Center,
the government-chartered computer security team at Carnegie Mellon
University in Pittsburgh.

The FBI quickly opened a criminal investigation, and agents were trying to
verify reports that the outbreak may have begun in Asia, possibly the
Philippines.

Computer security firms scurried to post software on their Web sites to
scan for the bug and remove it from infected machines.

The virus targets computers running on Microsoft's Windows operating
system, attacking the Outlook e-mail program and the Internet Explorer
browser, both of which are also made by Microsoft.

It spreads like most e-mail viruses, arriving as a seemingly friendly
message, infiltrating a person's computer address book and sending copies
of itself to contacts listed.

But in addition to overwhelming computer networks with the sheer crush of
e-mail it generates, the new virus strikes out at some of the most popular
new passions on the Internet, destroying digital photographs and music
stored with the digital technology known as MP3.

The virus disabled e-mail systems on Capitol Hill and in British
parliament. State Department officials found the virus in many of their
servers early Thursday and ''shut off our connection with the outside
world," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

AT&T Corp. shut down an e-mail system serving 145,700 employees.

''We're trying to give our tech support people enough room to find a
cleanser and make us pure again," said AT&T spokesman Burke Stinson.

In Britain, about 30 percent of company e-mail systems were brought down by
the virus, according to Network Associates, a computer security firm. In
Sweden, the tally was 80 percent.

''The way we look at the I Love You virus is it's almost like Melissa on
steroids," said Srivats Sampath, president and chief executive of security
firm McAfee.com, a division of Network Associates. ''It's the fastest
propagating virus we've seen."

Facts About the Computer Love Bug

A computer virus disguised as an electronic love note greeted Internet users around the world Thursday.

Here are some details:

Q. What is this virus all about?

A. The virus, technically known as a worm, is software written to spread itself automatically through e-mail or chat rooms. It began spreading through Asia and Europe while Americans were still sleeping. Circulation in the United States skyrocketed when the workday began.

Q. What does it look like?

A. The virus usually comes as e-mail from a friend or other familiar address. "ILOVEYOU" appears in the subject line. The note asks the recipient to "kindly check the attached LOVELETTER coming from me." Clicking on the attachment, "LOVE-LETTER-FOR-YOU.TXT.vbs," activates the virus.

Q. What does the virus do?

A. It can overwrite certain graphics, music and other files. It may also steal certain passwords and send them to an e-mail account believed based in the Philippines. As the virus replicates, it can also clog computer networks, causing delays and shutdowns.

Q. How does the virus spread?

A. If Microsoft Outlook e-mail program is used, the activated virus will automatically send copies to everyone listed in the program's address book. Users of other e-mail programs and non-Windows computers can also inadvertently spread the virus by forwarding the love note to a friend. The virus can also spread using through some chat room programs.

Q. Is this the same as last year's Melissa virus?

A. No, although it spreads in much the same way that Melissa spread. While Melissa limited copies to 50 people in the address book, the love virus can spread itself to hundreds, even thousands of other addresses. Plus, Melissa did not spread through chat rooms.

Q. How does this virus compare with other viruses?

A. Of the tens of thousands of known computer virus, security experts say this is the fastest to spread, partly because it does not limit its targets as Melissa did. Plus, Melissa first struck on a weekend, giving computer administrators time to clean out their networks before workers returned. David Perry at Trend Micro Inc. (NasdaqNM:TMIC - news), an anti-virus software maker, also notes "brilliant social engineering" on the part of the virus writer. "Who doesn't want to open an e-mail that says they love you?" he said. "My wife sends me e-mail with 'I love you' on top. I would have clicked on it."

Q. What should computer users do?

A. Install anti-virus software and get the latest update from the manufacturer's Web site. Do not open the attachment, ''LOVE-LETTER-FOR-YOU.TXT.vbs." Select highest security options for browser, e-mail and chat room programs. Network administrators should also screen incoming mail to remove messages with the virus.

Justice Department: Microsoft Uses Power Against Palm

The Justice Department said Microsoft Corp. is using its monopoly power to hurt competitors in the market for personal digital appliances, specifically mentioning the Palm Inc. computing platform.

The Justice Department comments, which were contained in arguments filed in support of the government's proposal to split up the software giant, could cast a cloud over Microsoft's launch earlier this month of its Pocket PC hand-held computer.

Microsoft launched the Pocket PC hand-held computer in a direct attempt to compete with the popular PalmPilot handheld computer, which dominates the so-called PDA market.

Arguing that conduct remedies were insufficient to stop Microsoft's anti-competitive and unlawful conduct, the government said that on July 11, 1999, ''Bill Gates wrote an e-mail directing that Microsoft redesign its software to harm competitors" who make personal digital appliances.

The department noted that this was less than 30 days after the company's 78-day trial ended, in which it was accused of using similar tactics against Netscape and others. Ultimately, the judge concluded such tactics violated the law.

''After discussing the Palm computing platform, Mr. Gates concluded in his e-mail," starts one tantalizing sentence -- and abruptly it ends. At that point, Gates' comments were censored.

The Justice Department had no further comment.

''We were surprised to learn about that today," said Jim Adamson, director of media relations at Santa Clara, Calif.-based Palm Inc., which just went public last month after spinning off from its parent 3Com Corp.. ''We are looking into the matter and beyond that, because it's part of pending litigation, we can't really comment any further."

Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan said the e-mail in question did not talk about ''harming" Palm, but instead asked how Microsoft could make its handheld products better than its rival's.

''This is pretty out of context and is not even an exhibit that was put in this case," Cullinan said of the e-mail cited by Justice. ''Once again they are mischaracterizing one line from one e-mail."

''What it (the e-mail) talks about is how our PDA will connect with Office, which has Outlook Express and Outlook included in it," Cullinan said, referring to Microsoft's popular e-mail and scheduling software.

''Does the Palm product not work in terms of not syncing up with any

Microsoft product? No," Cullinan said. ``This demonstrates how little the government understands this industry."

``What we understand is that Palm is the leader in the PDA marketplace, so are we a competitor of theirs? We just announced the Pocket PC, so you bet," Cullinan said.

Calling the government's reference to Palm ``really sad," Cullinan said it showed Justice was groping for reasons to condemn Microsoft.

``The government has never been shy about throwing stuff against a wall hoping they stick, so this is probably another foxhole they are trying to chase people down," Cullinan said.

``Once again the government is trying to say that anyone competing with Microsoft should not have to compete against Microsoft," Cullinan said Friday.

Web Tax Moratorium Moving in House

A five-year extension of the moratorium on taxes that target the Internet quickly cleared a House committee Thursday. It is one of three bills Republican leaders and the high-tech industry are pushing to reduce or prevent taxes in cyberspace.

Even though the current moratorium does not end until October 2001, the House Judiciary Committee rushed through the extension bill without any hearings and despite complaints that Congress was ignoring the central issue of how state sales taxes apply to electronic commerce.

As Republicans and Democrats battle for political support and campaign contributions from the high-tech sector, GOP leaders in the House plan a floor vote next week on the moratorium bill.

Also expected to move soon in the House are bills to permanently prohibit any tax on Internet access and to repeal the 3 percent telephone excise tax first enacted to finance the Spanish-American War.

``I think it's time to take that off the backs of the American people," said House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., of the telephone tax.

The bill approved on a 29-8 vote by the Judiciary Committee would extend through October 2006 the freeze on any new state, local or federal Internet tax and on those that single the Internet. The legislation also would repeal a clause that allows some states to retain Internet taxes on their books as of Oct. 1, 1998.

All three measures are supported by a coalition of 11 industry groups, including the American Electronics Association, the National Association of Manufacturers and the Software and Information Industry Association. They also were among the recent recommendations in a majority report from a commission created by Congress to suggest future e-commerce tax policy.

But organizations representing state and local governments and the National Retail Federation argue that the House's piecemeal approach protects a status quo that threatens future sales tax revenue and gives electronic retailers a tax advantage over traditional stores.

``While retailers oppose new taxes on the Internet, the industry believes that Congress should not extend the current moratorium without addressing the inequality in state sales and use tax systems," said Steve Pfister, senior vice president for government relations at the National Retail Federation.

But the House Judiciary Committee chairman, Rep. Henry Hyde, said extending the moratorium, which has broad bipartisan support, should not be viewed as a signal that Congress is unwilling to eventually tackle the more complex sales tax issue.

``I can assure you, nothing is further from the truth," said Hyde, R-Ill. ``There is no reason to hold hostage the continuation of these principles while we search for a perfect solution."

Some Democrats accused Republicans of putting the bill on a fast track to curry favor with the high-tech industry and demonstrate accomplishments for voters in an otherwise lethargic legislative year. It is also unclear whether any of the bills would pass the Senate or be signed into law by President Clinton.

``There is still a year to go on the moratorium. I don't understand the rush," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y. ``The only reason this is happening ... is that the House leadership wants to put a show on the floor next week."

The moratorium bill is H.R. 3709.

On the Net: Congress: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Access Windows 2000 Apps On Your Mac Via the Internet

Macintosh users can now use Windows 2000-based software, without installing software emulation packages like Virtual PC or Soft Windows, to run Windows 2000 applications on Macintosh platform, according to Personable.com.

How? The company says because of its new browser support. Personable.com, the first Application Service Provider (ASP) offering a range of "shrink-wrapped" software for rent over the Internet via standard Web browsers, claims to be the first company in the ASP space to serve Windows 2000 Applications to the Macintosh community.

With the support of Mac browsers, Macintosh users no longer have to worry if they have a specific version of Windows-based applications they may use infrequently says Benjamin Chou, president, Personable.com. They can just point their browser to <http://www.personable.com>, subscribe and get back to work. There is no charge to open an individual account at Personable.com. Accounts are activated instantly and users can try out new software immediately, Chou says.

"Why buy an application that you might only use infrequently? For Mac users, Personable.com is the perfect solution for Windows-based applications," he adds. "Mac users can now rent the most recent version of Windows-based applications, including Microsoft Office, when they need them."

You don't have to download any software or take up storage capacity with applications that aren't frequently used, Chou says. Since applications available from Personable.com require no additional plug-ins or emulation software to run, Windows applications "run seamlessly on the Mac platform -- with little more than a few clicks of the mouse," he adds.

The company says it's goal is to provide Mac users with a comprehensive library of software so you have instant access to the programs to do your work, from word processing and spreadsheets to graphical editors and HTML authors. Personable.com purportedly lets you instantly access your own Windows 2000 virtual desktop on the company servers, offering Microsoft Office 2000 Suites and other software. You select and rent the software you need, when you need it, and for however long you need to use it.

Personable.com automatically upgrades software, providing access to the latest versions of today's popular applications. In addition, working on Personable.com servers, Mac users no longer have to upgrade or change existing hardware configurations to accommodate Windows applications and storage requirements, Chou adds.

Personable.com offers individual subscriptions for personal use or individuals working from home and corporate subscriptions to accommodate multiple users in business enterprises. For an example of the pricing structure, under an individual account, renting the standard edition of Microsoft Office 2000 costs US \$19.95 per month and Microsoft Outlook 2000 is \$9.95 per month.

All Palm Devices to Have Web Access by Year End

Palm Inc.'s chief executive said on Tuesday that all of its handheld computing devices would be able to access the Web by the end of the year, and that the company would offer a wireless clip-on attachment for any Palm Pilots that are not currently online.

"All of our Palms will have access to the Internet by the end of the year," said Palm CEO Carl Yankowski, in an interview following a presentation to investors at a Merrill Lynch computer technology conference here.

"There will be an attachment that will clip on the device," he said, when asked about Palm users who have already purchased handheld organizers without Web access.

He did not offer details about changes to product lines, but did say that the company was testing so-called Blue Tooth wireless connections, which allow for any device to connect, without any cables, to other devices, computers, and peripherals such as printers.

Merrill Lynch analyst William Crawford said: "He is sending a message here that says Palm equals wireless. This is a kind of position statement for Palm."

Yankowski also said that Palm, which recently went public but is still 90 percent owned by 3Com Corp., was in talks with Sony Corp., which is developing smart phones, for possible collaboration on new products: "We are in a dialogue with Sony to see if there is any overlap in those areas."

Crawford said that Palm's stock price has been held in check pending the rollout of stock to 3Com shareholders for the spin-off, which is scheduled for August.

Microsoft Unveils New Digital Media Player

Microsoft Corp. on Tuesday unveiled new software for playing music and video on a PC, saying digital media was the biggest thing for computers since the Internet.

The Redmond, Wash.-based software giant is clearly taking aim at cross-town rival RealNetworks Inc., a maker of competing media software, as they duke it out in the digital media marketplace, analysts said.

Microsoft said it had posted the beta, or test, version of its beefed-up Windows Media Player for users to download over the Internet, and that a final version would be released this summer and in the next rendition of its Windows operating system for consumers.

The software can play music and video streamed in real-time over the Internet, as well as record, organize and play songs off CDs and access 1,900 Internet radio stations.

"This is the version that's going to take digital media really mainstream," Dave Fester, general manager of marketing for Microsoft's digital media division, said in an interview.

"Digital media is clearly where the next level of excitement really is," Fester said.

Analysts said the new player marks Microsoft's most serious effort to win a bigger slice of the rapidly growing market for such software, which has so far been dominated by Seattle-based RealNetworks and its RealPlayer and RealJukebox products.

"This is a major strategic thing for them," said Jeremy Schwartz, a digital music analyst with Forrester Research, a technology consultancy.

"It's kind of following a trend, which is trying to pull together many different but related functions into one interface, making it easy for consumers to deal with all of this stuff," Schwartz said.

For its part, Real on Tuesday held up recent figures from Internet usage analysis firm Media Metrix that showed RealPlayer was used by nearly 29 million people in March, more than all other rival players combined. Dennis Mudd, chief executive of MusicMatch, a privately held maker of another popular jukebox program, said Microsoft's player had limited capabilities and couldn't perform tasks like making CDs and printing album cover art.

"It is a basic product and it is a good way for people to get started with digital audio, but we feel that as people get serious about digital audio, they will turn to products like MusicMatch," Mudd said.

The new player will be a key feature of the upcoming consumer version of Windows, called Windows Millennium Edition, or Windows Me.

''Windows 95 integrated MS-DOS and Windows 98 integrated the Internet in a very deep way. The task with Millennium is how to take advantage of digital media ... really making a platform that rides this digital media revolution," Fester said.

Analysts said the move echoes Microsoft's attempts to defeat Netscape in the Internet browser wars -- the issue that sparked the current antitrust trial that could end with the break up of Microsoft.

Microsoft has countered that the media player has always a part of Windows, and that it faces competition from Real and Apple Computer Corp.'s Quicktime technology.

To try to drive the spread of the player, Microsoft also announced an overhaul of its WindowsMedia.com Web site, which boasts 60,000 songs by artists such as Christina Aguilera and Phish, as well as music videos and movie footage.

The player also includes technology from SRS Labs Inc. that uses software to create richer sound through small PC speakers or headphones. Users can also swap ''skins", or faceplates, that change how the player looks.

Microsoft's interest in digital media is more than just skin deep, though.

The company has been busily promoting its own Windows Media format for encoding music and video, saying it delivers better quality than popular formats like MP3 while also giving content providers a way to prevent piracy.

Most media player companies have struck deals to make their software capable of playing any of a dozen formats currently in use, including Microsoft's. But Microsoft's player supports only its own format and MP3.

''The big thing is that these formats are proprietary. It's very hard to continue to integrate at their pace and at our pace. The end experience is not that good for the consumer," Fester said.

MP3 could eventually be sent packing. Microsoft also said that I-Jam Multimedia LLC, which makes a popular line of portable devices for playing MP3 music, would make a model that played only the Windows Media format.

''They want to see Windows Media as the ubiquitous format, and certainly one way to do that without forcing anybody's hand is putting it in the operating system. That's what happened with Explorer," Schwartz said, referring to Microsoft's Internet browser that ended up crushing Netscape's.

AltaVista Unveils New Search Engine

AltaVista Co. introduced a sleeker, quicker search engine Wednesday in a bid to re-establish itself as the Internet's most sophisticated tour guide.

The Palo Alto, Calif.-based company designed the new engine, www.raging.com, for what it called ''search enthusiasts" - a mostly male audience of veteran Web surfers who visit numerous sites each day.

The new search engine fetches results 20 percent faster than rival sites and sorts the information in descending order to its relevancy to the request, according to Rod Schrock, AltaVista's chief executive officer.

Raging.com's ability to sort the results is part of AltaVista's patented technology. The speed of the searches reflects in part a decision not to include any graphics, including graphic-based advertisements.

Raging.com instead features four or five text-based advertising links that generate revenue based on how many visitors click on them.

AltaVista will receive 5 cents to 50 cents per click on raging.com's text ads, Schrock said. The company also hopes to generate revenue from raging.com by licensing the search technology to other businesses.

AltaVista will continue to operate its main search engine at www.AltaVista.com, though Schrock predicted about 10 to 15 percent of the traffic at AltaVista's main site would switch over to raging.com as a preferred search tool.

Media Metrix ranks AltaVista as the seventh most popular search engine in the United States with a 17 percent share. Yahoo! offers by far the most popular search engine with a 64 percent share, according to Media Metrix.

Including international markets, where AltaVista has a huge following, the company estimates that it has a 35 percent market share with about 60 million unique visitors. Yahoo, by comparison, has 145 million unique visitors.

AltaVista is trying to be the search engine equivalent of a BMW or Mercedes, as opposed to Yahoo's position as the General Motors or Toyota of the market, officials said.

'We are the 'UnYahoo!' and are very confident of that position," Schrock said. 'Yahoo! wants to be the Web and we want to unlock the full potential of the Web. Our strength is not breadth, but depth.'

As part of its stepped up marketing effort, AltaVista recently commissioned a study by ZD Labs to determine what search engine produced the most relevant results. AltaVista beat out Google, Direct Hit, Northern Light and Yahoo! for coming up with the most relevant results in multiword queries. Google - a recent threat in market for souped-up search engines - was the best for single-word queries, according to ZD Labs.

Barry Parr, director of consumer e-commerce for International Data Corp., said the new site will give AltaVista an additional edge.

'Google has been a real underground phenomenon among people in the know on the 'Net, and AltaVista has addressed that issue with this site," said Parr.

AltaVista had hoped to use Wednesday's announcement as a way to make a big splash following an initial public offering of the company's stock scheduled for mid-April. The company indefinitely postponed its \$281 million IPO after Internet stocks nose-dived in a wave of selling last month.

Schrock said AltaVista will still go public, but not until investors sentiment changes. 'We are waiting for the stock market to come back and we want AltaVista to be leading indicator that the Internet economy is

ready to grow again."

Beware Shopping Cart's Backdoor!

E-commerce sites using CART32 shopping cart software have a backdoor that allows attacker free reign, says report.

CART32, a popular shopping cart for small e-commerce sites, has been found to have a software backdoor that allows access to the servers running the software, said a security firm in an advisory Thursday.

The company that discovered the flaw stressed that it could easily lead to consumer credit-card information being stolen from compromised servers.

"This is a real backdoor -- it's a big security issue," said David Litchfield, director of security and co-founder of Cerberus Internet Security Ltd. "By using a password and a hidden link, we have been able to dump all the passwords out."

The passwords Litchfield refers to are the master keys to the software's data.

Once obtained, a network attacker essentially has carte blanche on the server running the software, letting the cyberthief deface the Web site (if hosted on the same machine), steal consumer credit-card information and read log files, among other activities.

The master key is a backdoor password -- "wemilo" -- that when entered in the right way, lists the full-access passwords for all the CART32 clients on the server.

'This is a real backdoor -- it's a big security issue,' says David Litchfield, Cerberus Internet Security Ltd. In many cases, in which a single company uses the software, an attacker will be able to extract a single password that accesses the CART32 software for that company's storefront on the computer.

In other cases, in which a single Internet service provider hosts many virtual storefronts for its customers, the passwords for every client will be listed.

ZDNet News, following instructions in the advisory, could list the scrambled passwords for more than 350 sites on one server.

According to Litchfield, the passwords can be used 'as is' to access the CART32 accounts and issue commands with privileged access.

CART32 maker: 'They gave us no time'

CART32 maker McMurtrey/Whitaker & Associates, Inc. confirmed the backdoor, but thought Cerberus' release of the information was premature.

ZDNet News, following instructions in the advisory, could list the scrambled passwords for more than 350 sites on one server. "They gave us no time on this -- zero," said Mark Pilkenton, technical support with McMurtrey/Whitaker & Associates, Inc. "They just told the world first."

Pilkenton could not explain what the backdoor had been doing in the software in the first place.

Cerberus' Litchfield gave the company the benefit of the doubt: "It could have been put in there to ease technical support access," he said.

In recent days, a number of "backdoors" have been announced.

A security hole in a Microsoft Corp. Web server product accompanied by the phrase "Netscape engineers are weenies!" garnered a great deal of attention after the Wall Street Journal called the hole 'a backdoor.' It was not.

A week later, Microsoft supporters crowed when a utility in the Red Hat distribution seemingly had a backdoor password that allowed administrator access. In reality, the program had a poor choice of default passwords for the system administrator and only affected users who did not change it, as is standard procedure.

Ryan Russell, manager of information systems for SecurityFocus.com, said neither flaw amounted to a backdoor.

"Backdoors are passwords that are intentionally hidden as opposed to a default or a programming error," he said, adding that the passwords have to allow extraordinary access into a computer to qualify.

"At first blush, the CART32 hole seems to be a more traditional backdoor," he said.

MWA's Pilkenton said the company's engineers were working on a patch for the flaw and had been notified by e-mail of the problem.

Until that patch is issued, Cerberus recommends that users of CART32 edit the program and change the hidden password from "wemilo" to something else and modify the program's permissions to administrator access only.

Court Backs Internet Providers

The Supreme Court Monday left intact a ruling that says Internet service providers are not legally and financially liable when someone is defamed in e-mail communications or bulletin board messages.

The court, acting without comment, rejected an appeal stemming from several vulgar messages an impostor posted six years ago in the name of Alexander Lunney, then 15.

Lunney, a Bronxville, N.Y., high school student at the time, sued Prodigy Services Co. after the impostor opened Internet accounts under his name and sent a threatening, profane e-mail message to someone who notified police.

During the police investigation, Prodigy sent Lunney a letter saying it was terminating one of the accounts "'due to the transmission of obscene, abusive, threatening and sexually explicit material." The real Alexander Lunney, whose innocence in the episode was quickly established, never was a Prodigy customer.

He sued the service provider, which later found other accounts the impostor

had opened in Lunney's name. On one of those accounts, vulgar bulletin board messages had been posted by the impostor.

Three New York state courts ruled that Lunney's lawsuit against Prodigy must fail.

The New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest tribunal, said the service provider was not legally culpable for either the objectionable e-mail or the bulletin board message.

"Prodigy was not a publisher of the e-mail transmitted through its system by a third party," the state court ruled unanimously. "We are unwilling to deny Prodigy the common-law qualified privilege accorded to telephone and telegraph companies."

It added: "The public would not be well served by compelling an (internet service provider) to examine and screen millions of e-mail communications, on pain of liability for defamation."

The state court also said Prodigy could not be treated as publisher of the electronic bulletin board message.

In the appeal acted on today, lawyers for Lunney called the case "the most egregious of a series of Internet related liability cases that have developed an enlarging rule of law that totally immunizes non-carrier, proprietary online services from virtually any ... liability."

The case is Lunney vs. Prodigy Services Co., 99-1430.

On the Net: For the state court ruling: <http://www.courts.net> and click on New York.

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